

INSIDE

2

Response to
Intervention

3

Fidelity of
Implementation

4

IPLA Profile
Cindy George takes
a new job

5

The Children's
Museum

6

Winter Conference
Review

7

Books for Leaders
Quote Corner

8

Calendar
IPLA Staff

How to Improve Student Achievement through Data-Based Decision Making

Executing a Simple Step-by-Step Process

By Renae Azziz, Ed.S., NCSP, Professional Development Trainer,
Virtuoso Education Consulting, www.virtuosoed.com



Renae Azziz, Ed.S., NCSP

Data, Data, So Much Data!

With the recent release of ISTEP scores, many of you probably have blurred vision from all of the data analysis you've been engaged in over the last month. Why do you spend so much of your time looking at data? Most educational leaders agree that engaging in data-based decision making (also referred to as problem solving) is a critical component in developing a plan to improve student achievement. The IPLA Curriculum Standard Rubrics as well as federal and state initiatives, such as NCLB and Indiana's Vision for Response to Intervention (RtI), speak to the importance of using data for decision making purposes. What do we mean by data? Data is simply a synonym for information. Data can be any type of information that is collected systematically to provide information for a specific purpose. It's important to review this data on a frequent and ongoing basis in order to identify areas in need of improvement, generate a plan of action to address those challenges, and monitor progress. By using data in this way, both administrators and teachers can work together to strengthen the link between curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes.

Sounds good, but how do I get started?

Effective use of data must be purposeful. As I travel across the State providing professional development trainings to districts and schools on data-based decision making, I've observed that most schools lack training in a specific process that allows for systematic problem solving. Therefore, I encourage schools to consider implementation of an I.D.E.A.L. process to guide problem solving.

AN I.D.E.A.L. PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS

I Identify the Concern

- Compare existing data to desired outcomes
- What Strengths do you notice?
- What are the Challenges you face?

D Define and Analyze the Problem using DATA

- Review existing data and prioritize the challenges.
- Determine which challenge you will address first.
- What factors may be contributing to the challenge?

E Explore Improvement Options

- Set a Measureable Goal for Improvement
- Brainstorm strategies that might address the concern and choose the most robust option for implementation.

A Act on an Action Plan with Consistency

- Write an Action Plan
- Determine how progress will be monitored
- Develop a protocol to ensure consistent implementation

L Look at Results to Determine Next Steps

- Review updated data
- Determine appropriate next steps
- Revise your action plan

(continued on page 8)



Response to Intervention at the Secondary Level

Tara Rinehart, RTI Specialist, Indiana Department of Education

Barbara Ross, Teacher at Connersville High School and Indiana RTI Teacher Fellowship, Indiana Department of Education

What is RTI? Response to Intervention is a systemic process that ensures ALL students learn. Indiana's Vision of Response to Intervention is a framework for prevention, advancement, and early intervention, which involves determining whether all students are learning and progressing at optimum capacity academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally when provided with high quality instruction that addresses all aspects of student learning. Composed of six core components (leadership; family, school, and community partnerships; cultural responsiveness; experienced-based curricula, instruction, and interventions/extensions; data-based decision making; and assessment and progress monitoring), Indiana's RTI advocates three- to five-tier systems based on using collaborative problem solving to assure schools meet all students' needs. According to the March 2008 Spectrum K-12 School Solutions and the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) survey of K-12 district administrators to determine the level of adoption of RTI, 73% of respondents implemented a three-tier model. Therefore, the description below reflects that model of RTI.

RTI as a Three-Tier Model RTI offers a unique approach to support secondary students, but it is first important to consider the fundamentals of a tiered RTI model. In Tier 1 of a three-tier model, educators: develop a core curricula aligned to state standards and mapped to determine when skills should be taught (i.e. which skills educators can teach together and when it makes sense to teach these skills); develop common formative assessments and summative probes to monitor students' progress and administer both academic and behavioral universal assessments to identify methods of student grouping, including high ability and at-risk students, as well as effective instructional approaches to match the needs of the learners. Educators use culturally responsive, research-based instructional and intervention strategies. Educators must ensure they deliver all instruction with fidelity and use a variety of formative and summative assessments to monitor student progress often and ascertain which students need more intensive interventions or extensions.

Tier 2 concentrates on targeted interventions and extensions determined by reviewing all relevant assessment and progress monitoring data. For academics, educators might use a standard protocol method that addresses the most common student needs through supplemental language arts and math labs that utilize small groups and evidenced-based strategies implemented with fidelity. Students with reading levels at fourth grade or above receive concentrated strategy instruction, while those reading below fourth grade concentrate on basic skill instruction. Students continue to receive instruction in the core curriculum in the general education classroom. Educators determine behavior interventions based on an analysis of student data and may employ social skills instruction, mentoring, and counseling groups. Educators must regularly monitor student progress to determine next steps (discontinue, continue, or increase the intensity of the intervention).

In Tier 3, students who require intense interventions as determined by data review receive instruction individually or in very small groups (two to five students). Choice of interventions typically relies on utilizing a problem solving method and developing an intervention plan. In

academics, customized instruction focuses on specific skills using evidence-based strategies implemented with fidelity. These approaches may include vocabulary development, mental imagery, scaffolding, math computation, etc., again based on student need. Throughout the process, students continue to receive instruction in all core curricular areas. For intense behavioral interventions, educators conduct a functional behavior assessment, develop a behavior intervention plan based on that document, and implement the plan as written. Research supports progress monitoring every one to two weeks to determine next steps.

Secondary RTI presents significant challenges for administrators, e.g., facilitating student engagement, scheduling, ensuring sufficient personnel, providing for flexible grouping, and making certain students earn credits toward graduation. Research shows that supporting student engagement involves several strategies:

Provide a more personalized educational environment with a supportive staff.

- Assign an advisor or advocate.
- Ensure materials match student needs.
- Make instruction relevant to students' future endeavors.
- Provide various learning and assessment opportunities.
- Maintain high expectations that are fair and clearly expressed.
- Utilize cooperative learning.
- Incorporate extrinsic and intrinsic rewards.

Since students should not miss any core classes, administrators may address scheduling and flexible grouping through specialized elective classes, before and after school sessions, student resource time, option periods (e.g. study hall), or any other strategy developed by the school. They may provide adequate personnel by redefining the roles of special educators, student service professionals, school psychologists, and paraprofessionals to provide support. Earning credits takes care of itself as students experience more success through increased engagement and development of critical skills.

Secondary principals must lead the process as their schools put RTI into practice. They must:

- Establish an RTI team that reflects the school population and familiarize that team and the staff with the systemic process.
- Help the RTI team obtain resources and provide professional development and coaching support for all staff.
- Ensure fidelity of implementation through routine, periodic observation and discussions with staff and make certain paraprofessionals work under the direct supervision of a highly qualified certified teacher.
- Research the availability of summative assessment (typically curriculum-based measurement) options with the RTI team (or entire staff) to select appropriate tools and methods and determine when/whether teacher performance warrants intervention/extension.
- Review aggregate data of classrooms and provide feedback to teachers, while creating conditions that enable teachers to be successful.

Without doubt, secondary RTI presents a challenge, but reconsidering current practices and putting a systemic process into effect will support student achievement and success. The Indiana's Vision of RTI Guidance Site (www.doe.in.gov/rti) offers additional resources. (continues at the bottom of page 3)



Fidelity: An Essential Ingredient in Student Learning

By Leah Nellis, Associate Professor of Educational and School Psychology; Director of Blumberg Center at Indiana State University, lnellis@indstate.edu and Ryan Newman, Principal at Towne Meadow Elementary in Carmel Clay Schools, IPLA Group 41, rnewman@ccs.k12.in.us.

The term fidelity is one that we are all familiar with but its significance in the field of education has recently grown as it is considered one of the critical elements of a successful RTI approach. Often the term is used as part of the phrase “fidelity of implementation” which simply refers to doing something in the way it was intended to be done. The concept of fidelity can be applied at many levels. Most centrally, fidelity of implementation applies to instruction at the various tiers of an RTI framework, including classroom instruction for all students, curricular extensions, and interventions. In this context, fidelity means that the instruction or intervention is delivered, or provided to students, in the way in which it was designed or developed. An analysis of fidelity can also be made with regards to the overall implementation of a school’s RTI process. This process might entail conducting universal screenings, instruction and intervention with appropriate frequencies of progress monitoring, and the use of data-based decision rules for informing next steps. In this larger context, fidelity of implementation applies to all aspects of that process happening in the manner, and in the timeframe, that was designed.

Considering fidelity of implementation is critical because it allows us to make informed decisions about whether our instruction is working. When we select evidence-based practices we do so because there is some research, or scientific basis, that tells us that the given instruction will make a difference for the students with whom we use it. However if instruction is not delivered to the students in the way in which it was designed (therefore lacking fidelity of implementation), then we limit the potential impact of the instruction as well as our ability to interpret student progress, or lack thereof, as attributable to the instructional practice in question. Similarly if an RTI framework or process is not implemented as intended or designed, the positive outcomes will likely be limited and potentially haphazard, and are therefore unrepeatable with similar types of students in the future. Yet, it will not be the framework (or the instruction) that was “wrong” rather it will be the implementation, or use of that framework or instruction, that prevented broad, positive impact for students and educators.

David Putnam, co-project manager of the Oregon RTI Project in the

Tigard Tualatin School District, says that without question, the leadership provided — or not provided — by building administrators can make or break an RTI initiative (Putnam, nd). Johnson, E., Mellard, D.F., Fuchs, D., & McKnight, M.A. (2006) suggest the following roles for building principals:

- Lead efforts to create a collaborative, positive environment in which fidelity of implementation is assessed and considered;

- Provide the resources and materials needed to ensure high-quality and consistent implementation, including opportunities to interact with colleagues, mentors, coaches;

- Conduct teacher and interventionist observations, walk-throughs, and discussions with staff on a regular basis to promote teacher improvement and high-quality implementation of evidence-based practices;

- Coordinate the necessary professional development, including inquiry, modeling, practice, and feedback; and

- Monitor and evaluate the impact of RTI practices using a variety of data including implementation data, average class performances, student progress, and need for increasingly intense, individualized intervention.

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IPLA Profile

Walter Bourke, Superintendent

For what school, corporation, or company do you work? Franklin Township Community School Corporation — Home of the Flashes!

What is your area of training? I have an undergraduate degree in science education. My masters is in secondary education from IUPUI. I earned my Indiana Administrator License from Butler University. I earned a doctorate with a dual major in school administration and curriculum and instruction from Indiana University.



Walter Bourke

What was your IPLA experience like? To my great benefit I have had many IPLA experiences. Each one of them brought me some new knowledge and understanding and an extended network of friends and colleagues.

What is your connection to IPLA? I think it is by umbilical cord. I was present at the very first IPLA session. I was enrolled in EPPSP at Butler University seeking to become a school administrator when Jerry Dewitt and others in the program became involved in the initiation of IPLA. I was more of an unpaid servant at this session than an attendee.

How has IPLA benefited you and/or contributed to your professional life? Every time that I have become involved with IPLA I have become a better school administrator in some way. I read. I listened to the best minds in education share their thoughts, and I connected with education leaders from across Indiana to reflect on strategies for improvement.

What is your philosophy of education or leadership? Education should be all about students. How they learn best? When they learn best? And what they should learn? Those simple questions provide the framework for what we should be trying to accomplish.

What have you been doing?/ What are you focusing on professionally? For the last two and one-half years, I have dedicated myself to engaging the students, teachers, and families of FTCSC to create the best school corporation that we can build together.

What is your favorite quote? “Too old to rock n’ roll - Too young to die”

What are you reading at the moment? *Essence of Decision* by Allison and Zelikov

What book do you recommend that everyone have in his/her professional library? Books that have meaning to them.

Cindy George takes a new job

Cindy George, our renowned conference coordinator for over seven years, has left us for greener pastures, literally. She is currently a secretary with Carolina Neurosurgery and Spine Associates in Charlotte, NC. Cindy made the move to be closer to her daughter, son-in-law, and new grandson, Charlie. She revels in the fact that they are now close enough to meet for dinner or babysit at a moment’s notice.



Cindy began working with IPLA in March 2001 as the conference coordinator, in charge of the nuts and bolts and countless details of the Academy and meetings. However, Cindy acknowledges how she was part of the IPLA team, responsible for reinventing and evolving its Vision, “Because IPLA lives what they preach, I always was part of the team, collaborating on the programs and directions being taken. . . .” “Buy in” was an important element that made us all want to do the best job we could. If you’re passionate about something, you tend to throw yourself into it.” As a result IPLA has benefited from such creativity, input, and beneficial collaboration.

Numerous educators have confirmed the benefits acquired from the IPLA curriculum and Cindy says that her experience was no different and calls the time with IPLA “as one of the best that I have had”. She focuses on the people involved in IPLA that made it so rewarding, “I think because there was so many facets to the job and a wonderful diversity of folks with whom I networked. I loved being a part of the facilitation teams as they began and progressed together to form a team throughout their 3 year commitment. I loved the staff meetings, the challenges that the presenters brought, and the participants themselves.” She recounts that the ontological coaching training from Larry Huggins and Bill Gavaghan provided listening and communication skills that have been invaluable to both her professional and personal life. Cindy finally describes her relationships with IPLA as more a family-based than as simply co-workers and colleagues, “I have been blessed to have formed lifelong friendships with many of the IPLA family and for that I will forever be grateful. Life experiences shared as a family will always be a cherished part of my remembrances of IPLA.”

When people inquire about IPLA, she says that she tells about her experience with great pride, “I was fortunate to be a part of one of the leading Principal Leadership Academy’s in the nation, under the directorship of Bill Gavaghan, whose vision for the future of IPLA has already impacted principals through the standards and rubrics developed.” Cindy incorporates the influence of the Marsh team, who teach the “heart part” and culture to incoming principals at the beginning of their experience. Also, she outlines the rich history of IPLA, whose visionaries, 23 years ago, “who knew what it took to establish a culture in a school that would promote caring, concern, and leadership to both teachers and students, and that legacy continues today as strong as ever.”

She thanks everyone for her fabulous send off and counts herself lucky to have been a part of IPLA. Cindy will surely be missed.



What School Leaders Need to Know

By Jennifer Busenbark, School Programs Assistant, The Children's Museum of Indianapolis



The Children's Museum of Indianapolis has been a favorite field trip destination for students and teachers for years. The Children's Museum is a non-profit institution committed to creating extraordinary family learning experiences that have the power to transform the lives of children and families. The facility houses 11 major galleries where visitors can explore the physical and natural sciences, history, world cultures, character education and the arts. The museum provides programs, events and professional development opportunities as well as on-line activities and standards based units of study for educators. These resources have been designed to be used independently or in conjunction with museum exhibits in order to enhance student achievement.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Workshops and Summer Institutes

Teachers can take the fun of The Children's Museum back to the classroom while addressing Indiana State Standards by using units of study and ideas from the museum's workshops and summer institutes. Whether teachers need credit (available from local universities) or are looking for new ideas to incorporate into their curriculum, they can find what they need at The Children's Museum. All workshops are designed around museum exhibits, include investigation of a multi-disciplinary, inquiry-based unit of study and hands-on experiences. Workshop participants receive a unit of study and the museum is currently reimbursing the school district for substitute pay up to \$65 for workshops taking place during the school day.

Educator Networking Nights

Educators are invited to free evenings at the museum, featuring tours through new exhibits, relevant presentations, snacks and lots of giveaways. Educator Networking Nights also include mini professional development sessions and interaction with hundreds of educators from all over the state.

Dinosaur Dig Expeditions

Educators can join Rick Crosslin on an exciting five-day experience designed especially for teachers. Spend two days collecting fossils in Faith, S.D. at the Ruth Mason Quarry, the largest fossil bed of duckbilled dinosaurs in the world. Teachers will also travel to the Badlands and Black Hills Institute of Geological Research to learn more about dinosaurs, fossil preparation and geology. Fossils collected will be prepped in the museum's paleontology lab.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Units of Study

Units of Study contain lessons that are tied to the museum exhibits and Indiana Academic Standards. They are organized around fundamental themes and enduring ideas that can be used in the classroom. A bound copy of the unit of study used in the institute or workshop is given to each



participant. However, these units can also be found at ChildrensMuseum.org. The units are intended for grades K-8 and are linked to past and present museum exhibits. They are also designed to be used as an extension of the class field trip experience or as an independent resource for teachers.

Games, Activities and WebQuests

Games and activities can be found on the museum's kid safe site by clicking on Teachers and then Classroom Resources. The WebQuests are arranged by grade level and include a teacher page explaining the activity and how it relates to the Indiana State Standards.

Visit Guides

Visit Guides are an online resource created to help teachers make the most of the museum experience. These guides contain a brief description about the program, objectives and standards met, pre and post-visit activities, a wealth of resources to enrich the program, and activities to encourage family involvement on the topic. These guides can be used to prepare students for their experience and continue the learning back in the classroom.

Stay Connected

The Museum's Teacher Club is designed to provide educators with the most current information about these museum programs and events along with teacher resources. All Indiana in-service and pre-service teachers are eligible to join. All members receive a free online monthly newsletter, invitations to special educator events, museum and store discounts, and two free admissions to the museum per year.

Visit ChildrensMuseum.org and click on "Teachers" for more information or to register for the Teacher Club, museum programs or professional development opportunities. Contact JenniferB@ChildrensMuseum.org for additional questions.

(800) 820-6214, ChildrensMuseum.org, (317) 334-4000

Results ... POW! Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships

19th Annual IPLA Alumni Association Winter Conference

By Schauna Findlay, IPLA Alumni Board, Vice President

During the 2009 Winter Conference, Dr. Mike Schmoker, author of *RESULTS NOW: How We Can Achieve Unprecedented Improvements in Teaching and Learning* and *RESULTS: the Key to Continuous School Improvement*, was our opening Keynote Speaker. Dr. Schmoker shared with us the primary tasks that must be present for us to improve student learning: 1) replace “Improvement Planning” with team-based efforts to improve WHAT is taught and HOW WELL, 2) deliver a Guaranteed and Viable curriculum, 3) simplify leadership, and 4) radically redefine literacy instruction.

First, we must establish a schedule of teacher team meetings (at least two per month) to discuss: specific problems or improvement opportunities, solutions to these problems (consistent with proven practice), monthly or quarterly measurable goals, and documentation of the breakthrough solutions. Then, document, recognize, and celebrate these.

A Team Learning Log from this type of meeting could include the following:

1. Members Present
2. Targeted Standard/Area of Weakness (from a state or local assessment)
3. Common Assessment (to evaluate instructional solution; briefly describe what students must know and be able to do)
4. Instructional Solution (brief description of lesson unit/strategy, which addresses the above area of weakness)
5. Short-Term Results (1-4 week cycle; after the assessment is given; ex: 17 of 28 students mastered the targeted standard)
6. Adjustments to Instruction (if results aren't satisfactory)

Second, we must agree upon what will actually get taught and when. By quarter, we must map the standard indicators that must be learned. From there, we must develop common quarterly assessments with ample intellectually rich, college-prep components (questions like those from the list below) and discuss the results of these assessments in our team meetings.

Third, leaders must conduct at least one unannounced classroom walk-through each month, looking for school-wide patterns of strength/weakness with regard to clear focus on essential standards; college prep learning opportunities including critical reasoning/higher order reading, writing, and thinking; and essential elements of an effective lesson. Principals must monitor what is happening in the classrooms and must ensure that the guaranteed and viable curriculum is getting learned. The leadership must also conduct quarterly curriculum reviews to discuss the success rate on quarterly assessments and identify areas of strength/weakness, review gradebooks to find the low-scoring assessments, and review scored work samples (weak/strong areas). Principals must then recognize and celebrate the “small wins” of teachers’ and teams’ work. Robert Evans says, “The single best, low cost, high leverage way to improve performance, morale, and the climate for change is to dramatically increase the levels of meaningful recognition for educators.”

Fourth, when we think about literacy instruction in all classrooms, we must ensure students are drawing inferences and conclusions, analyzing conflicting source documents, solving complex problems with no obvious answer, writing multiple 3-5 page papers supporting arguments with evidence, and reading far more books, articles, and essays than they now read in school [in class!]. The literacy opportunities below should be included at every opportunity. These opportunities can radically change the results we are getting. Students should discuss or write responses/interpretations of higher order questions like:

- How does this compare to other texts/characters we’ve read so far?
- What do you think might happen next? Why?
- Why do you think this (real/historic/fictional) character did _____?
- What do you think is meant by “_____” in the story?
- How do you think this (real/fictional) character felt when _____? How would you have felt?
- At the end of the story, (real/fictional character) realized that _____.
- There is enough information in the (passage/story) to show us that _____.
- What action might have been taken instead of _____? How would you have responded to the situation?
- How would you describe this (real/fictional) character? What sort of person is he/she?
- What is the explanation for _____ in the story?

Following Dr. Schmoker, our keynote luncheon speaker, Dr. Mike Klentschy, brought to the conference by Carolina Curriculum and I-STEM, talked about how much of the above could be accomplished by linking science and literacy in K-8 classrooms. He shared the results he had in turning around the highest poverty, highest ELL district in the state of California. His books *Using Science Notebooks in Elementary Classrooms* and *Scaffolding Science Inquiry through Lesson Design* became must read resources for me.

Following nearly 30 breakout sessions on our conference theme presented by Indiana school leaders, our closing keynote speaker, Dr. Paul Nussbaum, addressed Brain Health and the Rigor, Relevance, and Relationship Framework. Dr. Nussbaum reminded us that we won’t engage in activities that aren’t relevant to us, and students (or anyone) won’t change their behavior unless we personalize learning for them. That’s what relevance is.

Further, he shared how teaching with low levels of rigor and low levels of relevance will cause us to use just the association area of the brain, but as we increase rigor and relevance, we move from the association area to the frontal lobe and create multiple pathways for the new learning. Dr. Nussbaum presented the parts of the brain that are used with low level rigor and low level relevance versus high level rigor and high level relevance. Lessons with high levels of rigor and relevance, what are called Quadrant D lessons in the Rigor and Relevance Framework, develop students’ brains. Through these instructional approaches, students can actually build up brain reserve and ensure brain health through the aging process which can reduce incidents of dementia-causing illnesses like Alzheimer’s disease.

The Rigor and Relevance Framework supports the use of instructional strategies designed to maximize mental stimulation and cooperative learning instead of isolated rote memorization of facts. Rather than lecture and other traditional instruction techniques, Nussbaum challenged us to ensure we are employing strategies that engage students, treat them as active learners rather than empty receptacles into which knowledge can be delivered, and make school a place where students work and teachers observe, not the other way around. Rather than being sedentary, passive, and aligned in neat rows of desks, learners must be allowed to be tactile, experiential, interactive, and social and to move purposefully around the classroom as part of the learning process. Active learning provides multi-sensory stimuli to the brain. This allows our schools to be the Brain Health Centers of our communities.

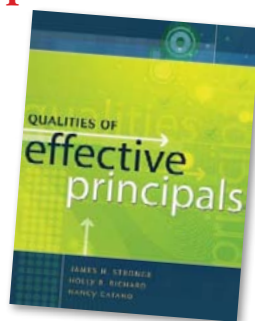


BOOKS FOR LEADERS

Qualities of Effective Principals

by James Stronge, Holly Richard,
and Nancy Catano

Book review by Marisa Donovan, *Teaching and Learning Coach of Mill Creek West Elementary School and member of Cohort Group 27 in Butler University's Experiential Program for Preparing School Principals (EPPSP).*



We have all probably worked for principals that would be categorized as more effective or less effective than others we've encountered. These experiences tend to shape our own leadership styles by causing us to reflect on the practices we've witnessed. Which of these characteristics would we hope to emulate in our own leadership positions? Which do we see as resulting in effective leadership versus ineffective leadership? What generalizations can we truly make about the best leaders?



Marisa Donovan

James Stronge, Holly Richard, and Nancy Catano attempt to answer these questions and others in Stronge's latest book, *Qualities of Effective Principals*.

In the same vein as the popular *Qualities of Effective Teachers*, Stronge brings to light the most pertinent research on the subject. Quoting from the works of Marzano, Fullan, Peterson, and countless others, Stronge compiles a compelling answer to the question of what makes an effective principal.

The most effective principals are those who create an atmosphere for learning that focuses on true student achievement. Adept "data divers" find themselves in better positions to create such a climate. Active involvement in determining the needs of students and ensuring that these needs are met is essential in today's high stakes educational arena.

Another important element in the effectiveness of principals is their ability to perform the tasks of "human resource administration." From interviewing and hiring to supporting and retaining new employees, it is critical that principals be able to seize the opportunity to improve the quality of teaching staff when it presents itself. Being intentional in the selection and support of new staff members can further a school's efforts in achieving its set goals. When the options are to either improve the current or hire new, more effective staff members, principals must take advantage of situations that further the work toward the school mission.

Other key issues cited in *Qualities of Effective Principals* include:

- Enlisting the service of all staff members in shared decision-making deems principals recipients of greater buy-in and an increase in positive affect.

- Purposeful teacher evaluation and assessing instructional quality are keys to success.

- Management of resources and creation of quality school improvement plans are integral components of school leadership.

- Effective communication is the cornerstone of the important relationships the building principal is charged with forging.

In a format that will please those who love to read for detail and those who are happier skipping to the "Key Research Findings," this book provides information that is both pertinent and thought-provoking for principals. The annotated bibliography in this book could nearly stand alone as a document worthy of attention. That, in combination with eight "Principal Skills Assessment Checklists," and a host of "Principal Quality Indicators and Red Flags," round out the book's offerings.

It is known that highly effective building leaders maintain the delicate balance between the needs of the school and staff and the continuous improvement of the leadership skills that precipitate student success. *Qualities of Effective Principals* provides new and experienced principals with a wealth of tools to pull off this balancing act.

QUOTE CORNER

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

—President Barack Obama



(DATA-BASED DECISION MAKING continued from page 1)

By utilizing the I.D.E.A.L. process as a type of “checklist” to organize the review of data, leadership teams are able to generate more comprehensive plans for improvement.

Ready, Set,... Wait!

While I am sure you’ve already got ideas about how the I.D.E.A.L. process might support data-based decision making in your building, before presenting this information at your next staff meeting, consider the following common challenges.

1. Teachers will need guidance on how to effectively use data to guide their instruction.

- Although a powerful tool, many teachers will not have background knowledge on using data to improve student outcomes. You will need to ensure that they receive the professional development needed to understand the process, the most appropriate types of data to analyze, and how the process can provide information that will connect to changes in their classroom practices.

2. Consider how robust your problem-solving toolbox is currently.

- As leaders, it is critical that you ensure that multiple levels of problem solving exist within your school building. The I.D.E.A.L. process, or a

systematic process similar to it, should be used to review district/school-level, grade-level, classroom-level, and student-level data. No one team can effectively address the needs of an entire school.

In conclusion, as educators our ultimate goal is to meet the needs of all students. Adopting a systematic process that will support our ability to use data to improve student outcomes is a proven strategy to help accomplish that goal.

Don’t hesitate to contact me for clarification or difficulties related to implementing a data-based decision making process in your building at razziz@virtuosod.com or visit www.virtuosod.com

Resources:

Bransford, J. & Stein, B. (1984). *The IDEAL Problem Solver: A guide for improving thinking, learning, and creativity*. New York: W.H. Freeman.

An Introduction to Data-Based Decision Making:

<http://www.specialconnections.ku.edu/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/speconn/main.php?cat=assessment§ion=ddm/main>

Data-Based Instructional Decision Making:

http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/DataBasedInstructionalDecisionMaking_powerpoint.pdf

C A L E N D A R

2009

March 1- IPLA Alumni Association Aspiring Principal

April 24 Scholarship Applications accepted at

www.doe.in.gov/ipla

April 14-15 IPLA Academy Group 44 & 45 Session
at Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel and Suites,
Keystone at the Crossing

April 16 IPLA Group 44 Graduation
at Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel and Suites,
Keystone at the Crossing

IPLA STAFF

Bill Gavaghan

Executive Director
gavaghan@doe.in.gov

Susan Kertes

Associate Director
skertes@doe.in.gov

Maggie McGrann

Financial Officer
mmcgrann@doe.in.gov

Katelyn Newhart

Administrative Assistant
knewhart@doe.in.gov

For more
information on the
**Indiana Principal
Leadership Academy**
Phone: 317-232-9004
Fax: 317-232-9005
or Web:

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Andy Roberts, *Special Edition* Designer, andy@Tangentnet.com
Tangent Media • www.Tangentnet.com • 317-459-9179

